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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WILLITON.
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR
THE YEAR 1958.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

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Burnell's Garage, Wootton Courtney - Refuse Collection
(By Contract).

WILLITON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR
1958.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my annual report upon the health and general sanitation of your district for the year 1958.

The general health of the district has been satisfactory. There were very few cases of infectious disease notified apart from a fairly considerable epidemic of measles during the latter part of the year. No cases of Poliomyelitis or Food Poisoning occurred and there were no deaths from infectious disease.

The year has seen a definite increase in the work of the department both in the amount of routine inspection and other duties and in the general clerical and administrative work. The construction of the Nuclear Power Station at Hinkley Point by the C.E.A. has had an impact on departments of the Council; not least has been the burden falling on the health team. The tremendous influx of workers constructing both the roadways to, and the power station itself, presented and still presents many problems, not least of which is the major problem of ensuring adequate sanitation over the wide area of the site works and satisfactory food hygiene precautions in the Canteen, which is capable of serving 3000 meals per day. The adjoining labour camp, housing up to 1000 men, and ancillary organisations including the Medical Aid Centre Resident Engineer's department (water and sewerage), have accounted for an appreciable amount of Officer's time.

An appreciable number of sub-standard houses are still being brought up to a modern standard with the aid of improvement grants. Enquiries regarding these and supervision during construction work takes up 50% of one Officer's time.

The following sections detail the work of the department during the year, together with vital statistics and the general public health services.

- Section A. Vital Statistics and Social Conditions.
- Section B. Water Supplies, Sewage and Refuse Disposal.
- Section C. Housing.
- Section D. Food Inspection and Supplies.
- Section E. Public Health Nuisances, Complaints, Etc.
- Section F. Camping.
- Section G. Other Acts administered by the Department.
- Section H. Summary of Inspections and Visits made by the Health Departments' Officers.

Section A.
Vital Statistics & Social Conditions.

The district in general is agricultural in character and being on the seaboard is attractive to the tourist. The A 39 highway proves to be one of the major roads, carrying holiday traffic further westwards so that there is, during holiday periods an appreciably large population in transit in addition to the considerable local holiday population, giving rise to much camping on unlicensed sites, road verges, lay-bys, etc, with all its attendant problems of litter, sanitation, etc.

The larger centres of population suffered to a great extent from the measles epidemic. Other infectious disease was slight, there being only five cases of Whooping Cough, two of Respiratory Tuberculosis and two of Primary Pneumonia.

Area	97,364
Population (Estimated mid-year home population)	13,350
Number of Dwelling Houses	4,433
Rateable Value	£121,800
Product of a Penny Rate	£460

<u>Live Births.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	85	93	178
Illegitimate	4	5	9
	<u>89</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>187</u>

Birth Rate per thousand population (live births)- 14.07
National Rate per thousand - 15.1

<u>Still Births.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	-	-	-
	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>

<u>Deaths.</u>			
From all causes	<u>81</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>174</u>

Death Rate per thousand population- 13.3
National Rate per thousand- 11.6

Health Services.

The district is served by Hospitals at Minehead and Musgrove Park, Taunton, and Hospitals for the aged sick at Williton, Bridgwater and Taunton. Ambulance services are available from Minehead and Musgrove Park.

Steam disinfection facilities continue to be available at the Williton & District Hospital and arrangements have been made with the Bridgwater Borough Council for the use of steam disinfection facilities for bedding or clothing from Hinkley Point Labour Camp requiring such treatment.

<u>Notifiable Diseases.</u>	<u>Cases Notified.</u>
Smallpox	Nil
Scarlet Fever	"
Diphtheria	"
Enteric Fever	"
Measles	108
Whooping Cough	5
Puerperal Pyrexia	Nil
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	"
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	"
Dysentery	"
Malaria	"
Acute Poliomyelitis	"
Encephalitis Lethargica	"
Erysipelas	"
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	2
" (Non-respiratory)	Nil
Food Poisoning	"

Section B.

Water Supplies, Sewage & Refuse Disposal.

Water Supplies.

Water for the district as a whole has proved adequate in quantity but quality varies to a considerable extent. The Majority of supplies, being unchlorinated, show varying bacteriological counts and although this contamination may not be seriously affecting public health it does indicate the presence of serious pollution which is always a potential danger.

Porlock supplies show an insufficiency in the late summer, due partly to increase in demand because of seasonal population increase and reduction in flow from springs, and the corrosion of certain inlet pipes into the system.

Twenty samples of water were taken for chemical analysis and all but one proved satisfactory. The unsatisfactory sample was from a Council-owned supply, the water being rendered unfit as a result of turbidity and the amount of iron present. This was rectified within a short time by thorough flushing of the mains. A total of 414 samples of water were taken from all supplies, both public mains and private sources, for bacteriological analysis; 355 samples were from public mains supplies and of these 69 were unsatisfactory. Notifications to water undertakers of unsatisfactory results resulted in prompt action to rectify matters. Of the results of samples taken from unchlorinated public supplies, 24.08% proved unsatisfactory and similarly, 9.09% of samples from chlorinated supplies. The high percentage of unsatisfactory results from unchlorinated supplies is understandable as many of the collecting areas concerned are subject to surface pollution from overgrowth of vegetation, stock grazing, deer, etc. The percentage of unsatisfactory results from chlorinated supplies is also very high but presents a rather false picture for the district as a whole, as the majority of these poor results were due to "teething troubles" associated with the new mains supply to Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Station.

Of sixteen samples from wells serving private properties, twelve proved unsatisfactory, resulting in the condemnation and closure of three wells.

Of 43 samples from private main supplies, nine proved unsatisfactory. The mains services to Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Station are under construction and have been the principal undertaking of the Engineer & Surveyor's department during the year. Satisfactory progress is being made.

Sewage Disposal.

The Crowcombe Village and Blue Anchor sewerage schemes have been completed but not all private connections to the sewer services have as yet been made.

The Washford and Roadwater scheme, at a cost of approximately £43,000, is under way. Future areas to be dealt with includes the villages of Selworthy, Allerford, Bossington and Bicknoller.

The inefficient functioning of septic tanks and soakaways is a constant source of complaint to the department, the cause usually being the unsatisfactory nature of the soil. In many areas where these troubles occur the only satisfactory alternative is the installation of a main drainage disposal system.

Refuse Disposal.

All Parishes other than Oare, receive a refuse collection service for the most part on a four-weekly basis. The more populated areas receive a fortnightly service and special arrangements are made for additional collections during the summer months for those areas most favoured by visitors and tourists. This collection service is carried out by a contractor.

Disposal is on four semi-controlled tips which are for the present proving adequate, but it is noticeable that tipping space fills up far quicker than in the past, indicative of the additional amount of refuse being collected.

The infrequent nature of collection in the district continues to give rise to considerable complaint both by householders and tradespeople.

The litter problem is dealt with in as practicable a manner as possible. With the assistance and co-operation of the National Trust, Parish Councils, etc, litter baskets have been fixed throughout the district at beauty spots, and in lay-bys, etc. These are cleared by the refuse contractor, the National Trust in some instances and by an employee of the department.

Section C.

Housing.

Houses erected, or gained from conversion schemes within the district during the year, totalled 30. With houses closed or demolished totalling 6, there are now a total number of 4427 permanent dwellings within the district of which the local authority own 717.



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The Housing Improvement Grant scheme is proving very successful. During the year, 43 schemes were approved, 36 schemes were completed at a total cost of £31,160 and the amount of grant paid out by the local authority totalled £10,046. This is an increase of £3,689 over the previous year.

The average cost of dwelling improvement has increased over the past three years as is indicated by the following figures:-

Average cost of (Dwelling Improvement (1956- £567. 1957- £818. 1958- £865.

The type of property proposed as suitable for improvement with the aid of the grant has varied in age, character and locality to a great extent and has included isolated Hill Farm cottages, thatched properties in tourist centres such as Selworthy and Dunster, and urban tunnel-type terraced houses in Porlock and Williton. The age of properties has similarly varied from the mid-sixteenth century to the early twentieth century.

There have been few applications for Certificates of Disrepair. Five only have been made and two certificates issued. Three undertakings by owners to carry out works have been received within the specified period of time.

I would like to bring to the notice of higher authority the desirability of including in the definition of unfitness of a dwelling those features which are the cause of many accidents in the home. In particular I would mention staircases which are often steep and winding although in good repair, and are a serious danger to both the aged and to young children.

Section D.

Food Inspection & Supplies.

Carcases & Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part.

	Cattle- excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed	669	9	55	3509	1503	nil
Number inspected	647	9	45	3110	1451	"
<u>All diseases except T.B. and Cysticerci.</u>						
<u>Whole carcases condemned.</u>	1	nil	nil	5	nil	"
<u>Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned</u>	65	2	2	12	29	"
<u>Percentage of the number inspected affected with diseases other than T.B. & Cysticerci.</u>	1.2%	22.2%	4.4%	0.5%	2%	"
<u>T.B. only-whole carcases condemned</u>	nil	1	nil	nil	nil	"
<u>Part or organ condemned</u>	2	nil	nil	nil	48	"
<u>Percentage of the number inspected affected with T.B.</u>	0.3%	11.1%	nil	nil	3.3%	"
<u>Cysticercosis.</u>						
<u>Carcases affected</u>	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	"
<u>Weight of Meat condemned (Lbs)-</u>						
<u>(a) Tuberculosis.</u>	30	672	nil	nil	793½	"
<u>(b) Cysticercosis.</u>	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	"
<u>(c) Other</u>	653½	25	42	348½	365½	"
Total -	683½	697	42	348½	1159	"

Slaughterhouses in the Central and Eastern areas of the district are dealing with appreciably more meat, particularly the latter where killing is now in progress six days a week for the Weston-Supper-Mare and London markets.

Tuberculosis in cattle has almost disappeared.

The standard of slaughterhouse premises has improved at Stogursey where the premises were completely modernised.

Efforts to bring slaughterhouses up to the standard necessary to comply with the new regulations will, I hope, bear fruit in 1959.

Food Premises & Food Hygiene.

The standard of food hygiene continues to be high, informal action only being necessary against a small number of caterers in the area.

Other Foodstuffs Condemned.

Canned Meats	-	118½lbs
" Fish	-	7 "
" Fruit	-	23½ "
" Veg.	-	7 "
" Milk	-	4 tins.

Section E.

Public Health Nuisances, Complaints, Etc.

A source of complaint arising from the discharge of cesspit emptiers has been overcome in the Western Parishes by allowing contractors to discharge into public sewers flowing out to sea.

Rodent Control.

The Council's operative has been fully employed throughout the year, treatments and inspections carried out are as follows :-

<u>Property.</u>	<u>Inspected.</u>	<u>Treated.</u>
Domestic	689	497
Agricultural	300	50
Business	45	18
Local Authority	11	4
Total:-	<u>1045</u>	<u>569</u>

Ministry requirements have been met regarding sewer inspection and treatment and 'block control' schemes operated where necessary.

Section F.

Camping.

The seasonal camping appeared to be less than usual. The construction of the Hinkley Point Nuclear Power station has given rise to an influx of caravans occupied by employees of the contractors.

This Council were asked by the Planning Authority to provide accommodation for 50 caravans, which it has endeavoured to do, but lack of services has meant improvisation and a series of complaints. It is hoped to improve conditions before the end of 1959.

Section G.

Factories Act, 1937.

There are 57 Factories in the district, including 6 licenced Slaughterhouses, which now fall within the province of H.M. Inspectorate.

The majority of the others are mainly of the light engineering type. The largest enterprise is the Nuclear Power Station at Hinkley Point referred to in the introduction to this report.

Two complaints regarding unsatisfactory sanitary accommodation have been received and dealt with.

There are 17 outworkers residing within the district and of these, one only is employed by a business outside the district.

There have been no cases of infectious disease within these households during the year.

Pet Animals Act.

Rag Flock Act.

There are no pet shops within the district or premises dealing in rag flock.

Prevention of Damage by Pests Act.

Details of action taken are dealt with under Section E.

Section H.
Housing Acts, 1936-1954
Rent Act, 1957
Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1958

Housing Inspections	403
Informal Notices Served	15
Statutory " "	13

Public Health Acts.

Inspections of Drainage & Sewerage	138
" " Water Supplies	73
" " Refuse Disposal	58
" " Camping & Caravan Sites	129
" " Nuisances	34
" " Filthy or Verminous Premises	15
" " Public Conveniences	5
" " Sanitary Fittings	4
Miscellaneous Inspections	28
Infectious Diseases Enquiries	5

Food & Drugs Acts.

Inspections of Slaughterhouses	45
" " Food & Catering Premises	31
" " Knackers Yards	4
Informal Notices Served	1

Factories Acts.

Inspections	13
Informal Notices Served	2
Complaints received	89
" investigated	89

For the Council's consideration in 1959 is it's future policy with regard to (a) refuse collection, (b) camping, in particular the residential camper, and (c) slaughterhouses.

My thanks are again due to the staff of the Public Health Department for their continued good work.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen

Your obedient servant,

M. B. Ch. B.

M.B., Ch.B.

Medical Officer of Health.

